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ABSTRACT

The quality of teaching, teachers, and teacher education is examined. An essay appraises current research and public opinion on teacher competence, noting efforts by school districts, teacher education institutions, and professional teacher associations to improve the quality of teachers. Minimum competency examinations, provisional certification, and inservice training are discussed. A workshop program which trains school administrators in evaluating and improving teacher performance is described. The program, offered on a district level, focuses on creating a supervisory partnership between the administrator and teacher. Examples of the trends toward 5-year teacher education programs and competency based teacher education programs are given. (FG)

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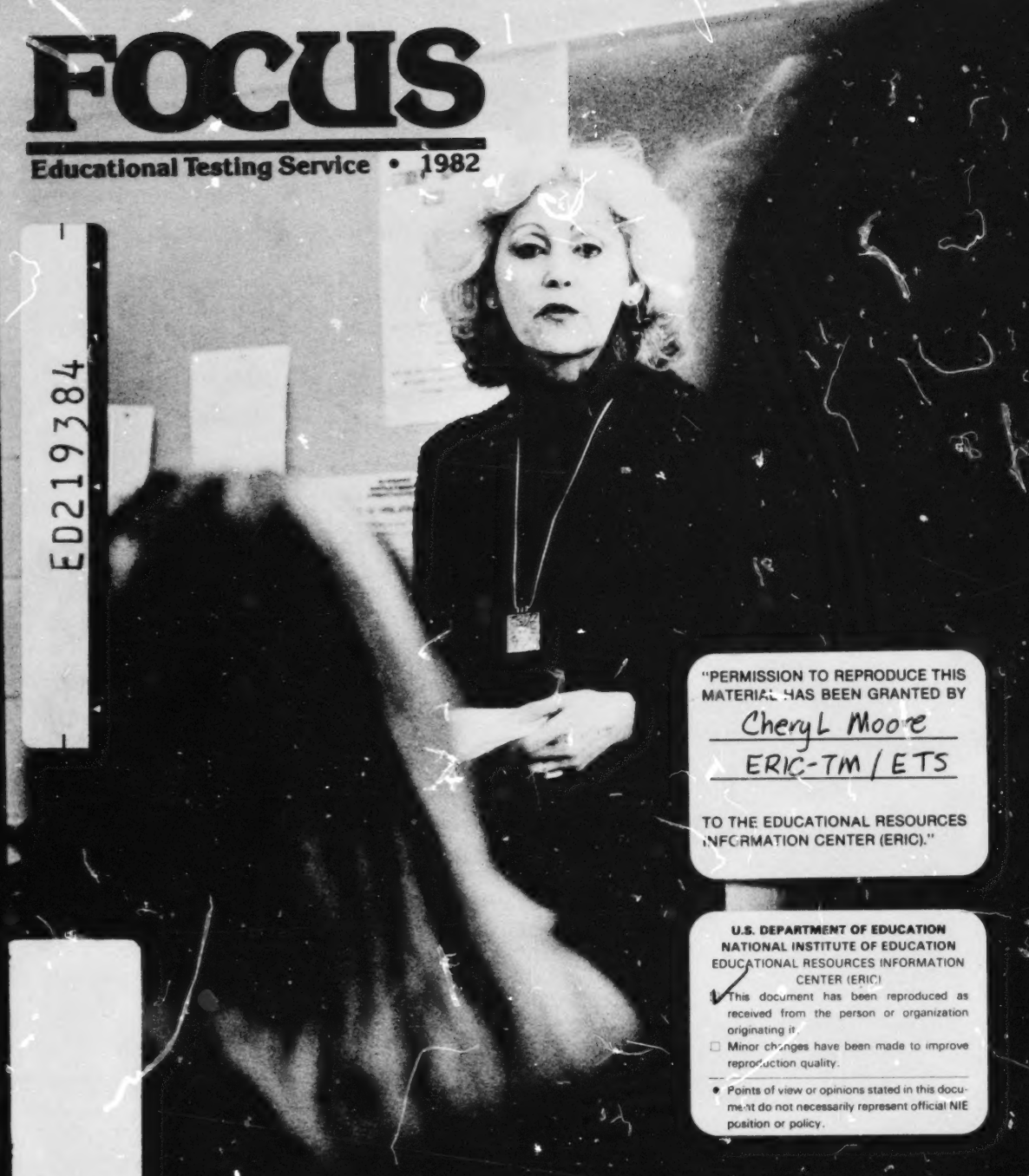

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Teacher Competence

FOCUS

Focus 10 • 1982 • Educational Testing Service
Editor • Albert Benderson

Each issue of FOCUS discusses a critical problem in education and the work Educational Testing Service and others are doing to cope with it. Most widely known for standardized tests, ETS is also one of the nation's largest nonprofit educational research organizations.

TEACHER COMPETENCE

by Albert Benderson

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Cover: Dr. Dorothy Rubin, Professor of Education at Trenton State College and noted author of reading and language arts texts

Design by Joseph L. Belica
Photos by Randall Hagadorn

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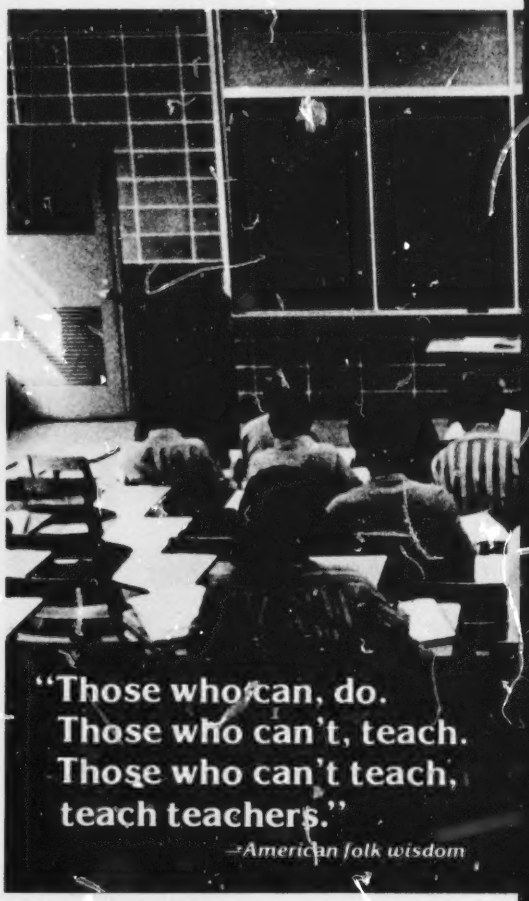
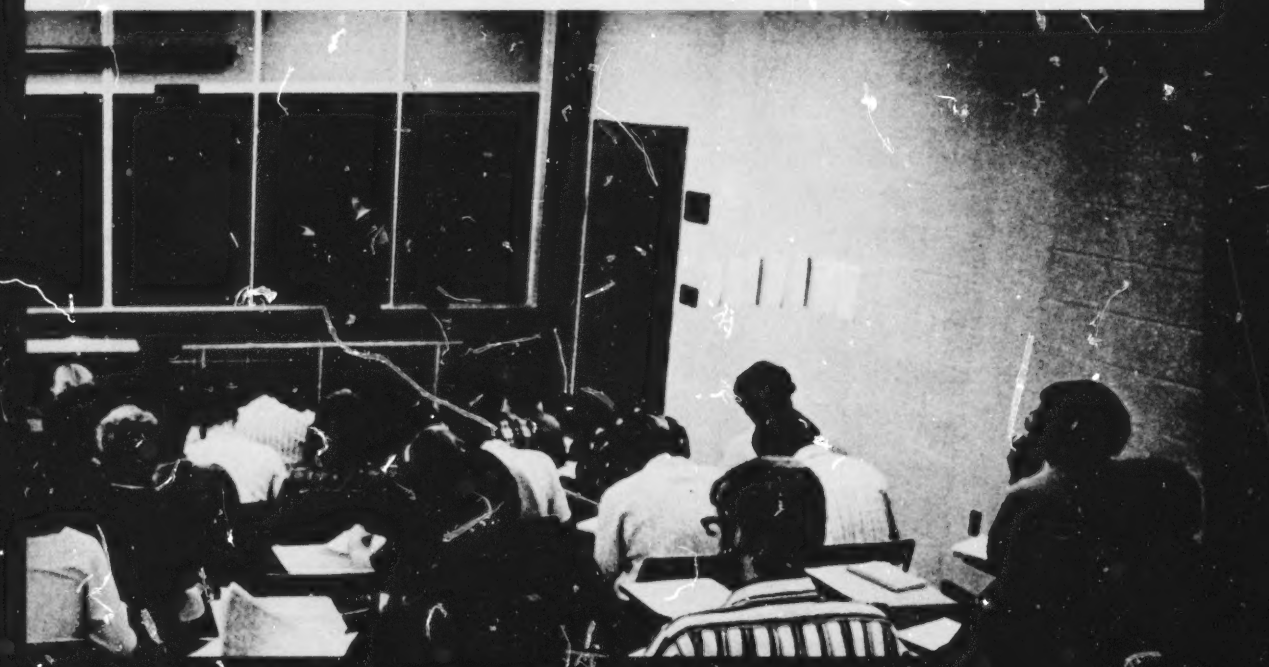
Teacher



THE TEACHER IN AMERICA

The teacher has traditionally been a favorite American scapegoat. By the 18th century, popular writers had already stereotyped the teacher as essentially a misfit. The prissy schoolmarm, condemned to perpetual spinsterhood by looks and temperament, and the overeducated wimp, fit only to hold a "woman's job," were familiar stock figures of American folklore even before Ichabod Crane made his appearance in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

Competence



"Americans value education, but they have never valued teachers."

—Sharon Robinson, Director, Instruction and Professional Development, National Education Association

Photo by Cliff Moore

While most Americans encourage their children to respect teachers, ambivalence towards the profession remains a strong element in our culture. When it became apparent that high schools were graduating functional illiterates en masse during the '70s, critics were quick to blame teachers for declining achievement and falling SAT scores. Although factors such as high divorce rates and television overdoses probably played a significant role in the decline of student achievement, critics were able to find considerable evidence to buttress their attacks on teachers.

A Crisis of Competence

Particularly disturbing was evidence suggesting that some teachers were scarcely more skilled in the basics than their students and that the problem was widespread and pervasive. In 1978 the Dallas Independent School District gave the Wersman Personnel Classification Test of basic skills to 535 first-year teachers and to a volunteer group of juniors and seniors from a private high school in the area. Not only did the students outperform the teachers, but more than half the first-year teachers fell below the score

considered acceptable by the district. In another examination of teacher competence in Houston, job applicants scored lower than the average high school junior in mathematical achievement.

Other evidence of deficiencies in basic skills cited in the popular press was more apocryphal, but nonetheless compelling. "Scott wont pass in his assignment at all, he had a poem to learn and he fell tu do it," wrote a Mobile, Alabama, teacher in a note reprinted in the June 16, 1980, *Time* magazine.

Time reported, in the same issue, estimates that as many as 20 percent of all teachers had not mastered the basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic they are supposed to teach.

The Shallow Talent Pool

If anything, the news about students entering teacher education programs was even gloomier. W. Timothy Weaver, associate professor of education at Boston University, reported in the May-June 1981 issue of the *Journal of Teacher Education* that from 1972-73 to 1979-80, the mean SAT Verbal score for prospective education majors nationwide had fallen from 418 to 389, and the mean SAT Math score had fallen from 449 to 418. In both categories, education majors were the lowest among 12 groups of college majors listed.

Weaver points out that the decline in scores for education majors is consistent with the overall drop in SAT scores during the decade. This general decline is reflected, for instance, in the proliferation of remedial writing programs for business executives. That the relative ranking of education majors, with respect to SAT scores, has not changed dramatically in the last 10 years is scant consolation because they have consistently been near the bottom of the heap.

Other, more recent measures underscore the fact that education majors do not represent the cream of the collegiate talent pool. In 1981, ETS disclosed that when high school seniors and college students were tested on their knowledge of international affairs, education majors scored lower than any

other group. In February 1982, the New Jersey Department of Higher Education reported that students intending to major in education had scored lower than any other group on the state's collegiate basic skills test.

Research indicates that factors other than an inadequate talent pool further diminish the number of topflight people working in the nation's classrooms. A study of the 1980 graduating class at North Texas State University, reported by Nancy Cummings Perry in the October 1981 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, revealed that, among graduates seeking teaching jobs, those who found positions were not necessarily those with the best academic records. "I found no significant differences," she writes, "on the academic variables of grade-point average, student-teaching evaluation, and professional recommendations between those students who found teaching positions and those who did not."

Perry also cites results in Dallas on the Wersman Personnel Classification Test of basic skills, mentioned earlier, as evidence that ". . . something in the hiring process favored applicants from the lower end of the scale." Although 55 percent of newly hired teachers failed the test, only 36 percent of all job applicants who took the test failed. She discusses other studies that indicate this is a national, rather than a localized, phenomenon. Further, she implies it reflects a widespread belief that education schools "hand out meaningless grades" despite research showing grade-point averages and student-teaching grades to be the most significant predictors of teacher competence.

Elsewhere in the same issue of *Kappan*, Phillip P. Schlechty and Victor S. Vance report that in North Carolina the most highly qualified teachers are those most likely to leave the profession early and in the greatest numbers.

The Salary Gap

Why are few people with superior academic credentials attracted to teaching? Why do many of the best people leave teaching? The prime reason cited by most experts is money. Although in some areas teachers can work themselves up to annual salaries well over $30,000 after 20 or more years of service, entry-level salaries are remarkably low compared to those in other professions. The starting salary for a teacher with a B.A. in New York City, where the cost of living is particularly high, is only $11,821, thousands of dollars less than a graduate with a business degree could command. A Texas school district found that high school graduates, in their first year, averaged $4,800 more than beginning teachers.

In 1980 teachers nationwide earned, on average, $17,364. Accountants averaged $24,215, chemists $35,983, and engineers $31,820. While fewer than half the education school graduates last year were able to find jobs, many school systems are unable to locate enough science or math teachers because their salaries are not competitive with those in industry. According to Harry Lustig, chairman of the educational advisory committee of the New York Academy of Sciences, in the April 6, 1982, New York *Times*, "Throughout the country, 22 percent of the high school mathematics teaching

posts are vacant, and 26 percent of the posts that are occupied are taught by people who are not certified, or only temporarily certified, to teach mathematics."

Lustig warns that inadequate instruction in science and math could turn the United States into a second-rate industrial power and end its leadership in health research, basic science, and military strength.

Some have suggested that differential pay scales should be established so districts could offer more money to prospective math and science teachers than would be offered to job seekers in overcrowded fields.

"I would ask people who argue against differential scales what the alternative is," says National Teacher Examinations (NTE) Director William Harris. "Do you want a science teacher who is less qualified simply because you couldn't find qualified candidates? You can't expect to get better teachers if you're going to maintain the kind of thinking that has been characteristic over recent years. The environment has changed, the conditions have changed, and thinking must change."

Nevertheless, teacher unions would undoubtedly resist differential salaries, and they are illegal in many places. In Houston, however, the school system offers bonuses to teachers in fields where shortages exist. In 1981-82, the bonus amounted to $2,000 and was contingent on the teacher being absent for no more than five days during the year and returning to the same school the following year. Additional bonuses were available for teachers working in undesirable locations.

Ronnie Veselka, a Houston school system researcher, reports that the bonuses have helped to stabalize staff and have proved attractive to prospective teachers, who are generally recruited from Northern states because of the shortage of candidates in the South.

Exploitation and Stress

Some critics argue that teaching salaries have traditionally been low because

teachers work only nine months a year and are finished by 3 p.m., a charge that can be refuted when one considers the long hours conscientious teachers devote to their jobs outside the classroom and the severe pressures of the job that necessitate recuperation periods. Others point out that pay scales have been low because, in the past, the profession was overwhelmingly made up of women, often earning a family's second income. In the '70s, many of the brightest women began to enter prestigious fields that paid far more than teaching. Lyn Gubser, executive director of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), says, "We can no longer exploit talented women by keeping them in the classroom because they can't go anywhere else. Competent women are going to get out."

The dramatic loss of the brightest women in teaching is reflected in the fact that SAT verbal scores for women majoring in education have plummeted 45 points over the past 12 years, compared to 32 points for men, and math scores for women have dropped 34 points, compared to 17 points for men.

Inadequate pay, however, is not the only factor discouraging bright students, female and male alike, from entering teacher-training programs. After all, pay scales in the profession have always been low, and yet good students were often drawn to teaching for reasons varying from job security to generous vacation time to sheer idealism.

Today, particularly in the public schools, the lure of job security has vanished in the face of widespread layoffs. There are almost no incentive rewards for good teachers. Working conditions have deteriorated severely, with violence plaguing urban schools and a general disrespect for educators becoming evident in the salary and curricular disputes that characterize school board meetings nationwide.

"If you look at stress jobs," says Edward Masonis, administrator of teacher programs and services at ETS, "teachers are ranked number one or number two along with air traffic controllers. Teachers are underpaid given the stress they endure to get through the day."

THE TEACHER EDUCATION QUAGMIRE

Others have suggested that the difficulty in recruiting topflight teachers runs deeper than inadequate pay or poor working conditions. These critics argue that the problem is deeply rooted in the way teachers are trained. "Rather than attract the very best person," writes Leo M. Van den Blink, an East Windsor, N.J., school administrator, in the September 2, 1979, *New York Times*, ". . . our teachers' colleges have tended to attract the mediocre, the unimaginative, the visionless men and women who, after a four-year grind, will have completed a list of courses usually short on academic content but rife with methodology that has little if any application to the requirements of the modern classroom."

Gene Lyons, in his award-winning September 1979 *Texas Monthly* article, "Why Teachers Can't Teach," accuses teachers' colleges of "coddling ignorance" and "driving self-respecting students away."

"After 80 years," writes Lyons, "Dewey's arguments in favor of student-centered rather than subject-centered approaches to learning have resulted in schools of education that stress method over subject matter to the point that would-be teachers spend all of their time learning how to teach. *What* to teach has unfortunately perished in the transition. A now self-evident truth—that a certain amount of pedagogical training beyond mere book knowledge is useful—has been used by the educationists to create a tax-supported empire of cant."

This charge is echoed in *Underground Grammarian* editor Richard Mitchell's latest book, *The Graves of Academe*, a scathing attack on teacher education. Mitchell, a professor of English at New Jersey's Glassboro State College, condemns education schools as inherently anti-intellectual. He derides "educationists" who ". . . beseech us to believe that skill in writing is obviously, while useful, much less important than humanistic things like the encouragement of self-expression, the enhancement of self-esteem, and the clarification of values."

Their cavalier attitude towards subject knowledge, he asserts, is aggravated by an

"It is doubtful if as many as two dozen of the 1,200 institutions that prepare teachers are maintaining programs that a bright youngster would find demanding."

—J. Myron Atkin

insistence upon intellectual conformity and a fear of ideas that "rock the boat."

"At the root of our widespread and institutionalized illiteracy," he says, "is a fevered commitment to socialization and an equally unhealthy hostility to the solitary, and thus probably antisocial, work of the mind."

Liberal Arts vs. Pedagogy

Numerous writers, more moderate in tone than Mitchell, have been equally critical of the education curriculum. Some take the opposite tack, arguing that teacher-training programs don't provide enough pedagogical training. Many education professors question whether a liberal arts graduate without professional training could cope with a class full of disruptive students or understand the developmental problems of the youngest students.

NCATE's Gubser says, "We know that nationally, over the last 20 years, there's been a steady decline in the amount of coursework allocated to professional studies, and a corresponding increase in the coursework taken in arts and sciences. As a group, we decry the erosion of professional coursework, especially if you look at the list of things that people need to know today, such as techniques for dealing with mainstreamed exceptional children, diagnostic skills in teaching reading, the applications of new audiovisual instructional technologies, and the uses of tests and measurement."

J. Myron Atkin, in the Winter 1981 issue of *Daedalus*, however, is critical of the intellectual content of teacher-education courses. "The courses on methods of teaching the various subjects sometimes consist of little more than helpful hints about effective classroom procedure, with a minimum of intellectual substance or theoretical underpinning. . . . It is doubtful if as many as two dozen of the 1,200 institutions that prepare teachers are maintaining programs that a bright youngster would find demanding."

Others argue that teacher education does not provide sufficient practical classroom experience. In a May-June 1981 *Journal of Teacher Education* article, "Collegial Ambience: Its Necessity in Teacher Education," Joseph Gore, associate dean of education at Southern Illinois University, argues that "practitioners cannot learn to practice by reading books, listening to erudite lectures, participating in heady discussion, nor for that matter even by conducting scholarly inquiry. They learn to practice largely by practicing."

Gore suggests that teacher education be separated from the college environment and conducted instead in schools of pedagogy, incorporating elementary and secondary school classes. They would involve education students and professors alike in the daily workings of the classroom, providing them with intense practical experience.

Van den Blink, on the other hand, argues that teachers should be recruited from the ranks of liberal arts majors or that the liberal arts component of teacher education should be expanded. "Give me a person with a solid academic background in English or political science or mathematics. Above all, give me a person who thinks—one who is aware of what is going on in the world, one who questions and probes into problems—and I will give

you a teacher who will stimulate, excite, and interest our school-age children.

"Never mind the methodology of teaching; it can be learned in the classroom."

MINIMUM COMPETENCE EXAMINATIONS

The obvious confusion over what constitutes optimal teacher education, and the widespread discontent with a system that currently produces some teachers deficient in basic skills, have caused many throughout the country to call for minimum competence examinations for certification candidates. Until recently, graduation from an approved teacher-education program has been sufficient in most states. By March 1982, however, 18 states had either instituted or proposed competence tests, covering basic skills and pedagogical knowledge, for teacher certification.

The most widely used examination program is ETS's National Teacher Examinations, administered in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia for teacher certification and in 18 states for licensing in speech pathology and audiology. Other states, such as California, Colorado, Maine, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia, make use of the NTE as an alternative to certain approved program requirements for regular certification. Three states administer their own examinations for teacher certification

Unions in Conflict

Competence examinations have received a mixed reception from teachers' organizations. The National Education Association (NEA) opposes competence testing for certification or hiring.

"It's the responsibility of the training institution," says Sharon Robinson of the

NEA, "to recommend folks for licensing who have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills in order to enter practice successfully. Now if the university cannot make that assertion, they should not recommend this person for credentialing.

"I'm going to assume that the university would have enough sense of protection regarding its own reputation and image not to graduate folks who don't successfully acquire basic skills. I can't imagine how folks can get through all those courses and write all those papers and take all those exams and not be able to demonstrate proficiency in basic skills."

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) supports the use of competence exams as a criterion for certification and hiring. "We would like to see the testing of all new teachers before they are hired, a far from universal practice at present," says AFT President Albert Shanker in an October 19, 1980, *Washington Post* article.

"Opponents of teacher testing," he adds, "note that a good grade on a math or English or social studies exam won't tell you if a person will make a good teacher, that exams cannot measure the complex set of abilities that go into teaching. True enough. But you can find out if an aspiring English teacher can spell or if a math teacher can do math. If they can't, there's no point looking at other qualities."

NTE Revisions

Over the past year, in response to the widespread demand for basic competence testing, the National Teacher Examinations have been fundamentally revised. The current NTE battery consists of two separate sections—the Common Examinations, designed to measure achievement in the liberal arts and professional training and taken by all candidates, and 25 area specialization examinations. The older General and Professional sections of the Common Exams are being revamped, and a

Communication Skills section, covering reading, writing, and listening, will be added.

Since the revision is being conducted largely in response to popular demand, ETS, in an unprecedented move, took the format to the people by sending preliminary specifications to 3,000 professionals and citizens, including education school deans, school principals, teachers, parents, and student teachers. They were asked to rate the importance of hundreds of proposed examination topics.

The response to the survey was impressive, with more than 50 percent returning their forms, and the results were used to weight the new Core Battery, which replaces the Common Exams and will be given for the first time in November '82.

The various sections of the new Core do not have to be given at the same time. The test of Communication Skills, for instance, can be separated from the rest of the exam and given at the end of the sophomore year for screening prospective education majors and for guidance.

"I suspect the Communication Skills section will be very instrumental in helping to improve and expand curricula by highlighting these skills so important to teaching," says Frieda Rosner, program administrator for the NTE.

NTE Director William Harris

NTE Program Administrator Frieda Rosner

PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION

The trend towards requiring prospective teachers to pass competence tests is merely one sign that states are no longer willing to accept graduation from a teacher-training program as a guarantee of teacher competence. A growing number of states now grant teacher-education graduates only provisional rather than permanent certification. Teachers then must satisfy various requirements, differing from state to state, in order to obtain permanent certificates.

California, 15 years ago, became the first state to award only provisional certification. Each teacher has five years to take an additional year of coursework at the graduate level in order to earn a permanent certificate. Recently proposals have been made to further stiffen the

requirements, and certification candidates will have to pass basic competence exams beginning this year.

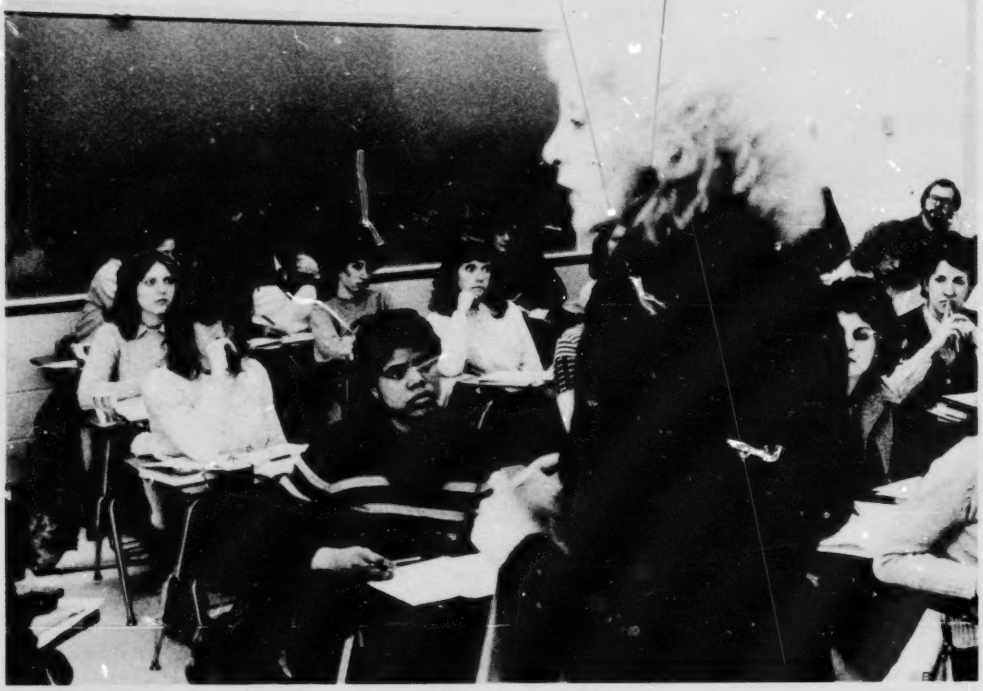
The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), in its June 1981 report, "The Need for Quality," urges that states in the region grant only provisional certification to college graduates until their classroom teaching can be evaluated.

"Performance weaknesses in content or in 'methods' areas, identified during provisional certification, should be addressed before regular certification is granted," the report says.

Among the Southern states, Georgia has been a leading innovator of the two-tiered certification process. The Georgia system, initiated in September 1980, is called performance-based certification. Candidates first have to pass a test, developed by the state, in their teaching field. Those who pass are granted a nonrenewable certificate and have three years to meet an on-the-job assessment requirement. In the classroom, teachers are evaluated for their competence in 14 specific skills by assessment teams, each consisting of an administrator, a teacher certified in the appropriate subject area, and a representative from one of the state's 17 regional assessment centers.

The assessment centers are an innovation that makes the system unique. They are staffed by former teachers who work full-time assessing the performance of beginning teachers. Officially they are called data collectors, and they insure that an observer is present who is external to the teacher's school district. There is one data collector for every 50 new teachers. While charged with evaluating classroom performance, data collectors also work with teachers to help them improve in areas where performance is weak.

In order to serve on an evaluation team, teachers and administrators undergo over 50 hours of training in the use of the Georgia Teacher Assessment Instrument. State law mandates that at least two teachers and one administrator in every school must be trained in evaluation, and so far, out of 60,000 teachers in the state, 10,000 have completed the training program.



Each committee member sits in on the teacher's class in the fall and prepares an independent evaluation. These assessments are combined to determine whether the teacher has mastered all 14 skills. The teacher is then informed of the results and counseled on how to improve in those areas where weakness is indicated. Graduate courses or staff development programs may be recommended to upgrade skills. State funds may even finance released time for the beginning teacher. A second chance is afforded when the evaluation process is repeated in the spring.

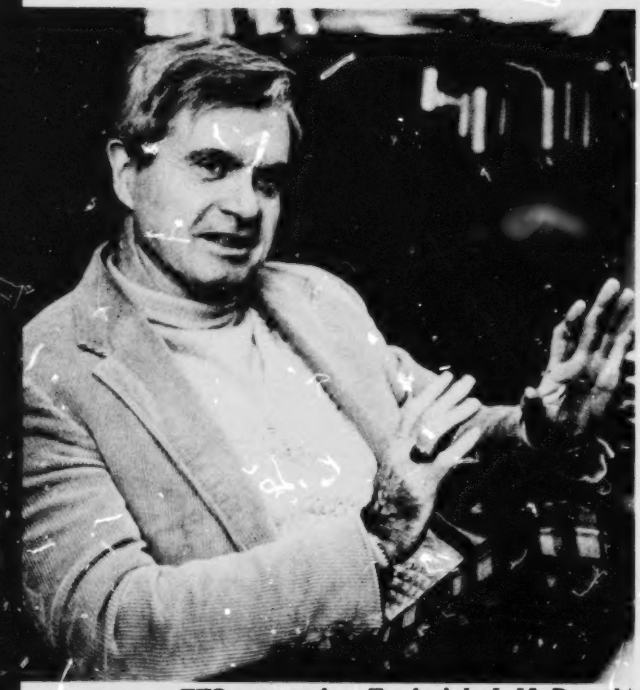
Last year, 34 percent of all beginning teachers were judged to be meeting the minimal level in all 14 skills. By the spring, 57 percent of beginning teachers were awarded permanent certification.

States Move towards Internships

Similar entry-year internship periods have been mandated or are being considered in states including Arizona, Florida, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas, and, according to Lester Solomon, Georgia's coordinator of performance-based certification, many of these states have been directly influenced by the Georgia model. Although none has adopted the relatively expensive procedure of creating and staffing regional assessment centers, nearly all are implementing or considering plans for new teachers to serve a probationary period during which their performance would be assessed by evaluation teams.

South Carolina's Educator Improvement Act, for instance, went into effect in September 1981 and mandates that new teachers receive provisional contracts for their first year, during which they must be observed by three specially trained representatives of the district and must participate in staff development programs if they don't measure up.

The state has developed its own list of teaching skills, similar to Georgia's, and 3,000 to 4,000 people have already been trained in teacher evaluation. The program is currently being field tested and will be



ETS researcher Frederick J. McDonald

fully operative in fall 1982.

Under Oklahoma's H.B. 1706, which became law in September 1981, new teachers are granted a one-year license rather than certification, and their performance is gauged by a team consisting of a principal, a consulting teacher, and a teacher educator who may recommend either permanent certification or another provisional year.

In Arizona, educators are planning to test the Georgia Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument in 1982-83 and then adapt it for their own use in a provisional certification program.

INSERVICE TRAINING

All these programs promise, through testing and classroom observations, to enhance and assure the competence of new teachers. The fact remains, however, that declining birth rates have caused enrollments to drop steadily in most parts of the country so that, with the exception of a limited number of fields like math and science, relatively little hiring of new teachers is going on. In 1979, fewer than half the prospective teachers found jobs. Layoffs have been far more prevalent than new jobs in many districts.

In the immediate future, competence exams and innovative certification programs, as well as improved teacher education, are likely to have little effect on the overall competence of the teacher corps. Too few new teachers are being hired to make a difference. Any immediate improvements in teacher performance, therefore, are most likely to be the result of inservice training.

Teacher Centers

Individual school districts have, for years, sponsored numerous types of staff development programs. In 1976, the NEA and the AFT won passage of federal legislation to fund teacher centers, a dramatic new vehicle for inservice training, throughout the country. In 1978, the first 60 centers were opened, and the program was expanded in subsequent years to include over 100. According to AFT President Shanker, teacher centers "fill a huge void" in the educational system. "If a teacher is having a problem," he writes in the October 19, 1980, *Washington Post*, "or even if the teacher thinks it would be useful to try a new teaching strategy or style, often he or she won't seek help from the person who's in charge of evaluating the teacher, the principal. The teacher center offers the service of another teacher or group of teachers who may have solved the same question, in a nonevaluative, nonthreatening situation. They are also places where creative teachers can share strategies and ideas with other creative teachers."

Significantly, teacher centers are largely staffed by teachers themselves. Under the law, school districts or colleges of education apply for the grants and sponsor local centers, but center policy boards must have teacher majorities.

Center personnel create and administer innovative inservice training courses, develop model curricula, and counsel teachers on difficult problems that arise in the classroom. The emphasis may vary from one district to another.

The Reagan administration has made the program part of a block grant for

1983, letting states decide whether to support it. Where they decide not to fund the centers, local school boards may pick up the tab. In New York, for instance, the Board of Education has already allocated $600,000 for teacher centers as a special inservice training project. Centers in many other areas, however, may not survive. Therefore, it is important that inservice training remain available outside the teacher center network.

THE IMPENDING BREAKDOWN

While inservice training is particularly vital in the short run, the long-term dilemma requires other solutions. The number of births has begun to rise, and by the end of the decade America faces the prospect of steadily increasing enrollments combined with a precipitous drop in the number of competent teachers available.

Frederick J. McDonald, a research scientist at ETS, views the future in grim, if not apocalyptic, terms. "I don't think the future looks good," he says. "The present teaching force will start retiring in large numbers in about five years. They're between the ages of 35 and 65 now. Most of the younger ones got wiped out in the recessions of the last decade.

"Within a decade the teaching force may be reduced by over a fourth, possibly half. What is there to fill it up with? People with SATs in the 300s—a generation of the most ignorant students who have gone into teaching.

"I'm not usually a doomsayer," he adds, "but the social forces operating here are so great and so different that we are entering an era where the system of public education that we built is just going to disappear. Those who are teaching in it now will be leaving it rather rapidly, and we are keeping it alive with low quality admissions to teacher-education programs."

Teacher Dissatisfaction Widespread

McDonald's warning was echoed by Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, in a lecture on "Teaching in America" delivered at Yale University in January 1982. "Today," he said, "despite tight economic conditions, teachers are resigning and the ablest teachers are leaving first. Between 1962 and 1976, the percentage of public school teachers with 20 or more years of experience was cut in half. One study of 437 Wisconsin high school graduates who became teachers revealed that 40 percent had left teaching after five years. Based on ability grouping, 72.97 percent of the low-ability students were still in teaching compared to only 59 percent of the most able students.

"If public support continues to decline, and if teaching standards continue to go

The Formative Evaluation Program

ETS sponsors a two-year-old inservice training program that promises to enhance the work of both teachers and administrators. "Formative Evaluation: Helping Teachers Teach" is an intensive workshop that trains school principals and other administrative and supervisory personnel in methods of evaluating and improving teacher performance. For new teachers, jobs and tenure are usually dependent upon classroom observations by supervisors. Some states, like New Jersey, require by law that every teacher be observed during the year. "We make the point in the workshop," says Lorraine Gaire, associate director of educational services at ETS, "that there is very little else that supervisors do that is more important than working with their teachers to improve them.

"The workshop takes the perspective that any teacher can get better. You have beginning teachers who need lots of help, you have teachers who do very well but could do better, and then you have some really excellent master teachers but there are things that could be done to help them remain lively, stimulating, and enthusiastic about what they're doing. We also deal with ways to develop a written record that is fair to the teacher and is legally responsible if you get to the point of having to dismiss the instructor."

The formative evaluation workshop is frequently presented as a two-day program in the school district. Normally, the workshop leader will return several months later to do a one day follow-up workshop after the ideas generated by the program have been put into practice. There is also

down, the intellectual and economic future of this nation will be threatened."

Unfortunately, families without children in the schools represent a majority in many, if not most, school districts today, and with budget cutting the current fashion, few school boards are thinking in terms of the generous increases in salaries and benefits necessary to make teaching a more attractive profession. McDonald suggests, therefore, that the answer will have to lie in a fundamental restructuring of the way public education is financed.

"What we've got to do," he says, "is create a profession in which the general conditions of work, economic incentives, and rewards are sufficient to attract good people. It probably has to be taken out of the hands of the school boards. With the suits that have been brought against states, in two or three decades we might eventually have statewide financing of

a three-day workshop given six times a year at various sites across the country, including ETS's Princeton headquarters. These sessions are typically attended by representatives of many different school districts. A one-day overview of the program is also offered at various sites to stimulate interest.

On the average, about two in-district workshops are given per month. Some districts, such as Oklahoma City and Shreveport, contract for a week or more of work so the district staff can be covered.

"We provide supervisors with an approach to classroom observation that allows them to make judgments about the effectiveness of teaching regardless of the particular teaching style being employed," says Glenn Tecker, program consultant and adjunct instructor. "We show them how to escape their personal biases about what good teaching looks like, and enable them to create a supervisory partnership with the teacher, rather than an adversarial relationship."

Beyond techniques of classroom observation, the workshops deal with ways of communicating results to the teachers who have been observed. Various approaches to conducting teacher conferences are demonstrated, and they are related to the supervisors' own leadership styles in practice sessions.

"Districts we've worked with," says Tecker, "tell us that the program has made a big difference in teacher-supervisor relationships, teacher motivation, teacher commitment, and, ultimately and most importantly, in the effectiveness of instruction."

Lorraine Gaire

schools. The locals would have to give up some control, and no one looks forward to more state bureaucracy, but those are all secondary issues. Education is the responsibility of the states. If there is a system of statewide financing, then it is possible to establish meaningful starting salaries and do something about working conditions.

"It's really not an awful lot different from the military: you've got an occupation where it's hard to retain people unless they're in certain categories and you make it really worth their while to stay. We might do better if somebody could enter teaching at age 20 and retire after 25 years at a really good amount—and 25 years is a long time to be teaching."

IMPROVING TEACHER EDUCATION

Higher salaries and better benefits alone, however, won't necessarily attract more and better students to education schools with second-rate reputations. During the 1970s, education schools responded to falling enrollments by lowering admissions standards. The strategy failed miserably. Good students have stayed away in greater numbers than ever, and overall enrollments have fallen by half since 1973.

"Who wants to go into a profession where everyone feels they're the crummiest people in the university?" asks McDonald. "We've interviewed teachers in Westchester County in New York, and every teacher that we interviewed expressed the feeling of having lower status in a community of business executives, doctors, and lawyers. This is replicated in lots of places. Where the concentrations of talent exist in this country, teachers are second-class citizens."

Five-Year Programs

Many are calling for higher admissions standards and tougher curricula at teacher-education schools. The question is, where

to begin? The quality of teacher education has been criticized from every angle. There are critics who assert that education majors get inadequate training in the liberal arts, while others argue that they do not take enough pedagogical courses, and yet others insist that they lack practical classroom-teaching experience.

Clearly, there aren't enough hours in the four-year teacher training curriculum to satisfy all those objections. Therefore, some colleges have increased the length of teacher-education programs to five years, allowing more emphasis on all areas where critics believe current programs to be deficient. Five-year plans, already enacted at schools such as Austin College in Texas, the University of New Hampshire, and the University of Kansas, place increased emphasis on both liberal arts courses and student teaching. Despite the fact that five-year programs are more demanding than traditional formats, both in terms of time and academic rigor, schools with extended curricula report that enrollments have grown. (See pages 20-24 for a fuller treatment of this subject.)

This development is encouraging, because, in contrast to the continued decline in the achievement of high school graduates, there are indications of a turnaround in the lower grades. Reading scores for children in elementary grades are on the rise, and a dramatic improvement has been demonstrated in urban areas, such as New York and Atlanta, with large numbers of disadvantaged students.

There are also signs that American education more than holds its own on the international scene. Ralph Tyler, reporting on a study of international education in the January 1981 *Phi Delta Kappan*, says, "it appears that the American educational system enables nearly three-quarters of our young people to attain a reading level most other nations only achieve with a very select group."

The challenge now is to ensure that, as the teachers responsible for these successes retire, they are not replaced by people with vastly inferior abilities and training. Five-year programs and other quality innovations may attract brighter undergraduates and prevent this calamity from occurring. Meanwhile, inservice training will continue to be essential to maintaining the quality of the current teaching force.

In both the short and long run, however, higher salaries will remain the key to attracting top people to teaching. If America wants to maintain its predominant position in the world and whatever scientific and technological lead it still possesses, it is going to have to place a much higher priority on financing education. Teaching salaries must be made competitive with those in other professions, or those who complain about the supposedly high cost of education now may live to regret the even higher cost of inadequate education in the future.

Teacher Education: The Move Toward Quality

Currently, the most promising plan for improving the quality of teacher education is the five-year curriculum. It is hardly a new idea. Austin College in Sherman, Texas, and Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, have offered five-year teacher education programs for over a decade. Adding a year to the curriculum provides additional time for the liberal arts courses and practice teaching that so many educators feel are inadequately covered in four-year programs. Combined with tightened entrance requirements, the five-year program could make teacher education more respectable academically.

So, why haven't more than a few colleges embraced the five-year model? Generally, arguments for the opposition can be reduced to one word—"fear." Education-school officials are afraid that requiring an extra year for an education degree will drive more students away from programs already suffering from falling enrollments.

Schlechty and Vance articulate this fear in their October 1980 *Phi Delta Kappan* article. "If teacher education becomes more rigorous and demanding," they write, "it seems likely that many of the most academically able teachers who now enter teaching will choose not to do so—simply because, with the same effort and commitment, they can get more of what society has to offer from other occupations."

The trend in admissions to education schools over the last decade, however, would seem to suggest that the opposite is true. Lowered standards at most education colleges have been met with continued falling enrollments. In 1972, 317,254 graduates were produced by education schools—an all-time high. By 1978, the number had fallen to 190,266.

Perhaps it is now time to try the opposite approach. "People are afraid to take the risk," Frederick J. McDonald says, "but where programs have raised their standards, there's never been an instance where a program has failed."

A Tough Program Draws Students

At Austin College, a well-established five-year program has consistently attracted and graduated high-quality students. Although Austin is a small college of 1,100 students, 100 of whom are enrolled in the education program, the fact that its program fulfills enrollment targets while other schools with lowered standards are floundering would seem to indicate that larger institutions might do well to rethink their admissions and academic policies.

The Austin Teacher Program emerged from the ferment of the '60s, when students and faculty alike were becoming disenchanted with the conventional teacher-education program in which individuals qualified for certification largely by taking a number of theoretical courses.

The years 1965-67 were devoted to a fundamental rethinking of the program. Teacher opinions were surveyed, both locally and nationally. Overwhelmingly, the response indicated that public school teachers felt quite strongly that too much time in the education curriculum was devoted to theoretical courses with few real applications in the classroom and that too little time was allocated to practical classroom experience. Members of the liberal arts faculty at Austin insisted that the quality of the B.A. degree in education was undermined by insufficient preparation in the humanities and sciences.

In response to this feedback, Austin College transformed its four-year B.A. program into a five-year M.A. program emphasizing the liberal arts and classroom-teaching experience. Although 36 semester hours were added to the curriculum, no additional education courses were required. Unlike the conventional approach, in which students have only limited teaching experience late in their college years, the new plan includes two noncredit freshman and sophomore labs entailing practical classroom experiences. Students also take at least 50 hours of supervised classroom teaching in the senior year and complete one full term as interns during the fifth year. Public school personnel participate extensively in the program.

"Before our people student-teach in the fifth year," says faculty member John White, "they probably have more hours in the classroom than most people who have finished student-teaching."

Students must apply for admission to the graduate year. According to White, they generally log 200 to 300 hours in the elementary or high school classroom in

Education students learn to prepare materials demonstrating seed germination for elementary grades.

order to be admitted. They also must take the Graduate Record Examinations and maintain an acceptable grade-point average in the B.A. program.

Nevertheless, the program continues to draw students far above the caliber attracted by most teacher-training programs. Average combined SAT scores for students in the program are over 1,000, well above the national average of 809.

A survey of graduates indicated that three-quarters of them were employed as teachers, and one-third of those not teaching were taking time out to rear families. Graduates overwhelmingly expressed support for the Austin program, giving it high ratings for all aspects of teacher preparation.

Bill Freeman, an Austin faculty member, says that Austin's success proves that "students *do* want quality in their teacher education program, and they *will* spend extra time and money to get it! When Austin College went to the additional year and included a master's degree along with certification, students did not go elsewhere for their teacher certification programs. In fact, better students were attracted to the Austin Teacher Program."

In New Hampshire—
Another Success Story

Similar results are reported at the University of New Hampshire, which has been offering a five-year teacher-education program since 1974. Many of the assumptions underlying the program resemble those that inspired the Austin effort. As described by Dr. Michael D. Andrew, who initiated and coordinated planning for the program and later served as director, these include the assumptions that a good general education is essential to good teaching and that theory should be more fully integrated with practical teaching experiences. "We have cut down on the methods courses," says Andrew, "but we've expanded the field-based portion."

In order to do this, the university places great reliance upon classroom teachers, rather than university professors, as the primary instructors and supervisors for the internship, an approach which Andrew suggests is given much lip-service by teacher educators but is, in reality, often

viewed as a threat to their authority and jobs.

Students get early experience working in the schools as teaching assistants, usually in the sophomore year. They are encouraged to take on teaching responsibilities immediately and participate in at least 65 hours of instructional activities, providing them with a firm basis for making career decisions.

About half the New Hampshire students decide they don't want to be teachers after the sophomore year. Those who remain are screened before proceeding to the junior and senior years, which require a major in an academic subject plus a minor in traditional education courses.

At the end of four years, students receive bachelor's degrees, and in the fifth year they work toward master's degrees. Graduate study includes a full-year teaching internship and one or two summers of coursework. According to Andrew, the undergraduate and graduate programs are not separate entities but fully integrated. "The professional training is spread across both the undergraduate and graduate degrees with the graduate degree being the only one in education, per se."

Admission to the fifth year is by no means automatic. Students must have undergraduate academic records that meet established standards plus recommendations from instructors and major department advisors. The standards are high. Over the past six years, entering students have had cumulative grade-point averages of about 3.1 on a 4.0 scale. On the Graduate Record Examinations, they have averaged 547 on the verbal aptitude test and 537 on the quantitative aptitude test.

"Our program reverses the way it used to be," says Andrew. "Education was taken as something to fall back upon. We've set up a system where, if they don't make it in the education program, they fall back on their academic majors. So we've tried to turn around the way in which education is seen by students."

When asked why students would be attracted to such a rigorously selective program to train for a profession that pays as poorly as teaching, Andrew replies, "Our people want to teach because it's a social commitment, and they are interested in getting the best possible preparation. They tend to see this as a superior program because it requires higher academic standards and gives them a longer internship period."

Andrew does admit that New Hampshire has a very small program for a state university. The school is currently graduating 150 new teachers a year out of a student body of approximately 12,000. "The interesting thing," he points out, "is that there's been a slow but steady increase in the number of people coming in for the five-year program when everyone else has been showing pretty drastic drops in the old four-year programs."

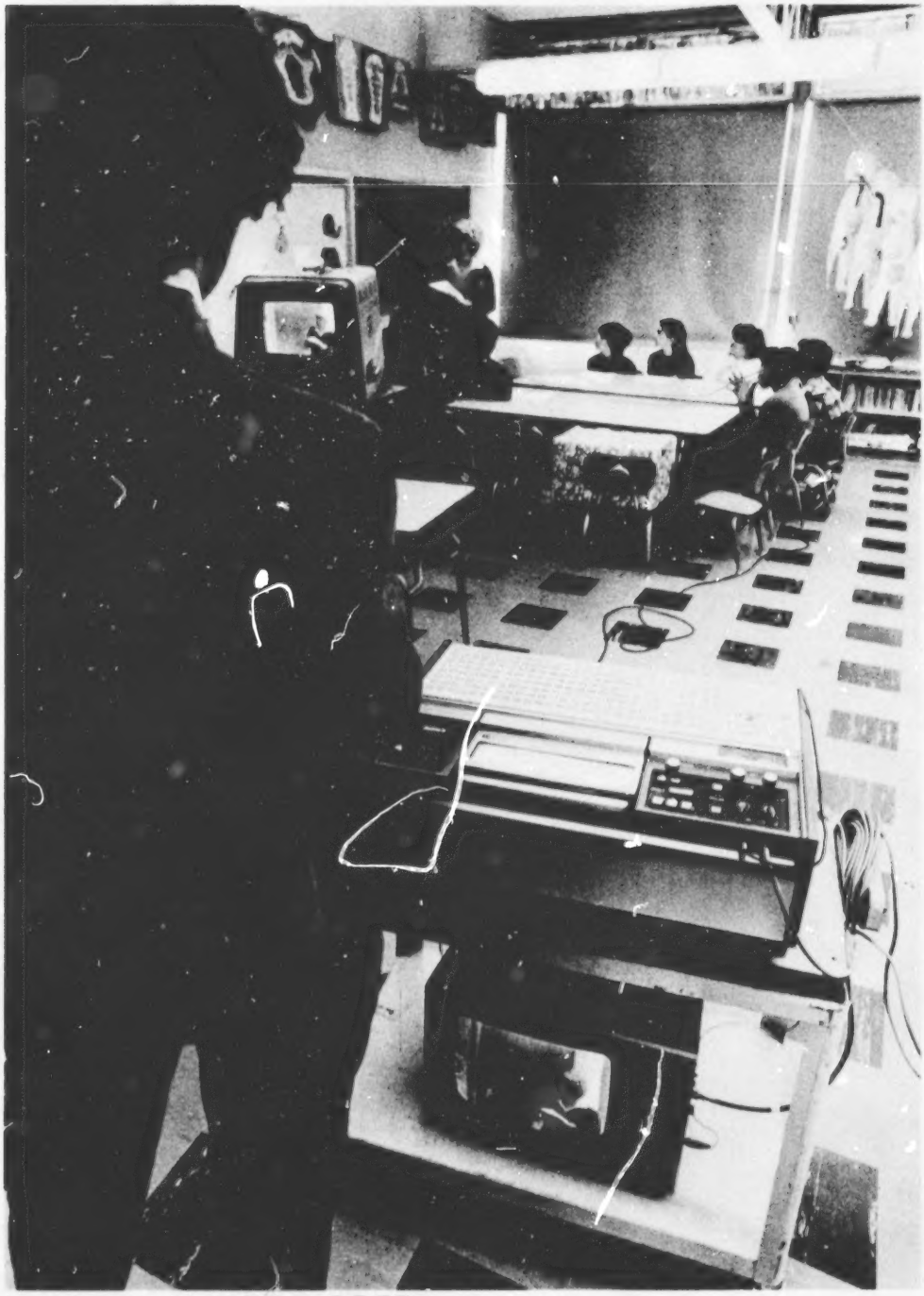
Andrew suggests that, because New Hampshire students put in an extra year of training, they have more commitment to teaching than is typical. Statistics back him up. While nearly 40 percent of the graduates from the old four-year program never sought jobs in teaching, over 90 percent of those who graduate from the five-year program seek jobs in the field and, even more remarkably, virtually all find them.

"In order to get bright students," Andrew says, "you have to create—and this is where people won't take the risk—a high-quality, high-standard, restrictive program, and you have to recognize what kind of people will go for that. You have to tap their motivations for wanting to teach, which we haven't even begun to do in this business."

Other Innovative Programs

This premise, that quality programs attract rather than scare off bright students, is making headway at other institutions as well.

- The University of Kansas has instituted a five-year curriculum, beginning in the fall of 1981, which has much in common with the Austin and New Hampshire programs. Heavy emphasis is placed on practical teaching experience beginning in the freshman year. All but one of the professional education courses has a field component, so that, even before practice teaching in the fifth year, students spend an estimated 250 hours in public school classrooms. The general education component of the



In the Trenton State College C.B.T.E. Program, students learn to recognize critical points in the lesson when videotaping practice teaching sessions.

curriculum has also been strengthened.

Although Dean Dale P. Scannell foresees a temporary enrollment decrease, he believes that enrollments will then recover. "We'd rather have a committed group of high-ability students, even if it's small," he says, "than have a larger group of less committed students."

- Since 1964, Allegheny College, in Meadville, Pennsylvania, has participated in a special arrangement with the Cleveland, Ohio, school system in which the first year of teaching also becomes the final year of a five-year teacher-education program. Students, who obtain certification after a summer of graduate courses, must find their own jobs in public or private schools in Cleveland. Some secure fulltime positions, while others work as substitutes or even unpaid interns. During what is often the most crucial year in a teacher's career, students have active support from the college. They must manage their own classes but are helped by professors with classroom-management ideas, discipline techniques, field-based course work, and classroom observations. Students also participate in workshops geared to individual needs and mutual concerns.

- The University of South Florida in Tampa has devised the Sun Coast Area Teacher Training (SCATT) program to upgrade the quality of education majors within the context of a four-year program. The program provides an enriched curriculum for those scoring high on entrance exams, and in the last semester of the senior year, participants become SCATT interns. Unlike regular students, they get the opportunity to work with teachers specially trained to supervise interns. Moreover, the SCATT interns also come back to campus for two weeks of special professional training. Those who complete the SCATT program with grade-point averages of 3.2 or higher get letters in their placement files identifying them as "talented, committed people."

"The whole concept," says Dr. Joyce Swarzman, assistant program director, "is that the best possible people should be out in our schools. How do you keep the best possible people and get them out in the schools? One way is to identify them. The second way is to make them feel special, and the third is to give them a professional attitude that leads to a commitment to education."

Competency-Based Teacher Education

Trenton State College in New Jersey has achieved national recognition with a program that offers yet another approach to improving teacher education. Its Competency-Based Teacher Education (C.B.T.E.) program won the 1981 Distinguished Service Award presented by the Association of Teacher Educators to the outstanding teacher-education program in the United States and Canada.

Elementary education majors may choose between the C.B.T.E. program and a conventional curriculum, and one-third opt for C.B.T.E. All secondary education majors participate in the program. The teacher's role is defined in terms of eight broad areas of competence, and students are expected to master all eight before graduation. These areas are broken down into specific units for instructional purposes. During the junior year, for instance, the curriculum consists of 30 modules, each focusing on a different teaching skill. Students work independently with individualized instruction and progress at their own rate.

All instruction is tied directly to classroom experience, particularly in the elementary education program. In the sophomore year, for instance, elementary education students spend four mornings a week in Trenton's Monument Elementary School. Theoretical coursework is integrated directly with their classroom experiences.

"We want no methods courses taught unless there is a concurrent field experience," says program coordinator Leon Durkin. "If theory is to be taught, the field experience should be on the same day or the next. There is theory, but not in isolation."

The most radical innovation occurs during the junior year. For one semester, all instructional activities take place at Pennypacker Park Elementary School in

Willingboro, New Jersey. With the help of college professors assigned to the school, students conduct short lessons, observe teaching, participate in seminars, and complete assignments connected with various study modules.

As many as 20 of the practice-teaching sessions are videotaped by a fellow student. Students are evaluated by the classroom teacher, as well as by professors who view the tapes. Similar programs for secondary education majors are conducted at schools in other localities.

All students must also complete an eight-week student-teaching program during the senior year.

"Students in teacher education meet the same entrance requirements as students in all other fields, and standards have been raised each year," says Durkin. "We say if you're not willing to work hard, don't come into our program."

It is clear, from the experience of the schools discussed, that high-quality education programs can draw superior students. If more colleges follow these examples, the threatened shortage of first-rate teachers may yet be averted.

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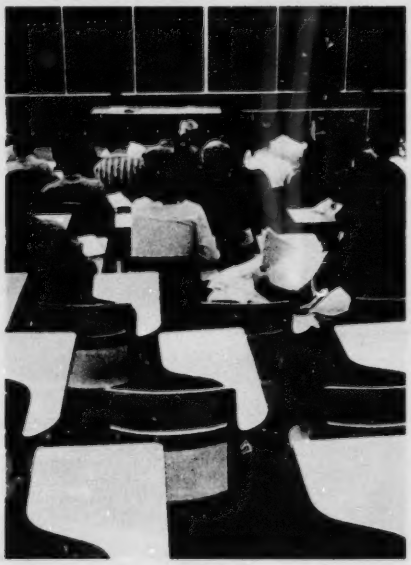

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